

THE JACOBS REPORT

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GRANHOLM WORKS TO PREVENT UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES **Initiative Includes "Talk Early, Talk Often"**

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm unveiled a new pilot program entitled, "Talk Early, Talk Often," designed to offer parents a resource for talking with their middle school-age children about abstinence and sexuality issues. The "Talk Early, Talk Often" pilot is part of the Granholm Administration's Blueprint for Preventing Unintended Pregnancies that includes two other initiatives: increased access to family planning services for low income women and contraceptive equity for men and women.

"Parents should be the primary sex educators of their children, and we want to lead the way by giving them the tools they need to talk frankly about issues involving abstinence and sexuality," Granholm said. "When armed with information and the tools they need to communicate effectively, parents can be instrumental in providing critical messages to their children that can help them abstain from sexual intercourse. By doing so, they can help them avoid early and unintended pregnancy as well as the threat of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

"If all pregnancies were intended, the state would see significant reductions in infant mortality, child abuse, child neglect, and abortion," Granholm added.

The Michigan Parent Teacher Student Association (MPTSA) has been instrumental in the creation of the pilot program, which will be shared with parents in a series of school district-sponsored meetings this fall.

The Michigan Department of Community Health has submitted a request to obtain federal approval for a waiver to expand eligibility for family planning services for low-income families. The waiver would ensure that all men and women of child bearing age have access to family planning services by expanding Medicaid eligibility to low-income women of child bearing age without insurance coverage.

It is estimated that each public dollar spent to provide family planning services saves an estimated \$3 that would otherwise be spent in Medicaid costs for pregnancy-related care and medical care for newborns, according to national Medicaid research.

Finally, Granholm said that all women and men should have ready access to the full range of contraceptive options, thus increasing the likelihood that each sexually active man or woman has an available contraceptive method that is most convenient and which she/he is willing to use.

Granholtm said she supports passing contraceptive equity legislation. Senators Beverly Hammerstrom (R-Temperance) and Martha Scott (D-Highland Park) have introduced Senate Bills 431 and 432 that, if passed, would require insurers who provide prescription drug coverage to include all U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved contraceptives.

“Unintended pregnancy is an issue that affects public health, our economy, and our society, because one way or another, we are all affected by its impact,” said Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, Michigan Surgeon General. “Working together, we can ensure that every pregnancy is an intended pregnancy.”

The Michigan Department of Community Health’s Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS - a survey of maternal experiences and behaviors before and during a woman's pregnancy) data for the year 2001 shows that 40.6 percent of pregnancies were unintended.

The total cost to Medicaid for the delivery of a baby and first year of life is \$11,528 – with the cost of delivery averaging \$6,197 and the cost of first year of life services averaging \$5,331. In FY 2000, the state Medicaid program paid for prenatal, delivery and post-natal care of roughly 26,000 unintended births. Each birth cost Medicaid \$11,000, which translates to \$286 million in costs for Michigan.

If Michigan can reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by 10 percent, it would save the state over \$27 million in Medicaid expenditures annually.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/miparentresources.

GRANHOLM URGES BUDGET ACTION

No Agreement Until Summer’s End?

Although legislative leaders and administration officials are meeting to work out agreements on economic development, business taxes and the budget, Governor Jennifer Granholm said that she did not expect a budget agreement until late August or early September, leaving little room between the agreement and the end of the fiscal year September 30.

As a result of non-concurrence between the House, Senate, and the Granholm Administration, all 17 budget bills are currently bottled up in conference committee.

Further complicating discussions is a revised recommendation from the administration in the coming days. The latest revenue estimating conference projected revenues less than those used in the original budget proposal.

“We have a proposal we’re going to bring to the budget group on how to resolve that,” Gov. Granholm said, though she declined to elaborate on where cuts would be made or additional revenue generated.

But she said she would leave it to the workgroup process for agreements on the budget, business taxes, economic development programs and the Michigan Merit Award.

The governor seems lukewarm to an overall business tax cut—as long as both sides can agree on how to pay for it. “Obviously the Single Business Tax group can't give away the store and leave nothing for the '05-'06 budget,” she said. “We have to be able to balance the budget.”

If tax cuts would generate economic growth, she argued that the \$1.7 billion in cuts since 1999 should have kept the state at least on steady ground over the past five years, rather than allowing the job hemorrhaging it has seen, she said.

“You would think we would be the most economically robust state in the nation given the trajectory of tax cuts,” she added. “I need to see data that we will get the economic growth from an across the board tax cut.”

Gov. Granholm did not close the door to any item on the budget. “All the items in the budget are valuable,” she said. “You just have to come up with a way to pay for it.”

GRANHOLM URGES LEGISLATURE TO GET MOVING

Governor Jennifer Granholm used the words “extremely unproductive” to describe the current 93rd Michigan Legislature. The governor said that she is especially disappointed, considering that Michigan’s economy is in a crisis and the Legislature has not sent her any bills to address that situation.

“They have put on my desk about 50 bills that range from reapportioning the Potato Commission to the dead animals composting act . . . [to] repealing the horseshoers lien act, when our economy is in crisis,” she said in a recent interview. “[W]e need to get serious about restructuring the state’s economy and putting people to work.”

The governor also lamented that major differences remain between her administration and the Legislature on the 2005-06 budget, which she said has proven to be the most difficult of the last three.

Restructuring Michigan’s economy is like “turning a battleship,” she said, stressing that diversification is a long-term project. Even so, positive signs are starting to appear over the state’s economic landscape.

Looking ahead to the 2006 election, Gov. Granholm said that she intended to be honest with the voters about the difficulties that the state is having and will continue to face as it converts its economy. People will understand the difficulties, she said.

And with a message of building jobs and “courageous” economic restructuring, she said that she feels confident that she will win re-election. Democrats could also retake both the Senate and the House, she said.

Ms. Granholm said that while the Legislature is taking a break, she hoped there is “not much of a pause of action” in the Capitol.

She released a letter to lawmakers this week urging the Legislature by August to send her legislation giving tax breaks to businesses without “shifting the burden to Michigan families,” making a “significant investment” in new technology businesses, revamping the Merit Award, enacting her “Jobs Today” proposal on downtown development and school construction, protecting children from sex offenders and putting restrictions on violent and sexually explicit video games.

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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